

**THE GROUND WATER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION  
17<sup>TH</sup> MEETING  
SUMMARY**

**Friday, March 14, 2003**

**Prepared by:**

**The Department of Natural Resources**

**Office of Conservation**

**Ground Water Management Staff**

## **Call to Order**

### **Commission members in attendance:**

Steve Chustz, Department of Environmental Quality

Jim Welsh, Department of Natural Resources

Richard Durrett, Sparta Ground Water Conservation District

Karen Gautreaux, Governor's Designee

Dean Lowe, Department of Health and Hospitals

John Roussel, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

Brad Spicer, Department of Agriculture and Forestry

Michael Taylor, Department of Economic Development

Linda Zaunbrecher, Farm Bureau Member

Bo Bolourchi, Department of Transportation and Development

Len Bahr, Governor's Office on Coastal Activities

Fulbert Namwamba, Geologist/Engineer

### **Advisory Task Force Members in Attendance**

Bill Branch, LSU AgCenter

Charles R. Demas, United States Geological Survey, Water Resources

Henry T. Graham, Jr., Louisiana Chemical Association

Bradford Hanson, Louisiana Geological Survey

Kyle McCann, Farm Bureau

Olevia McDonald, Sparta Ground Water Conservation District

C. A. “Buck” Vandersteen, Louisiana Forestry Association

Linda M. Walker, League of Women Voters – New Orleans

### **Ground Water Management Staff Activities**

The Office of Conservation continues to receive Water Well Information Sheets. The total received to date is 640.

The implementation plan approved at the December 13<sup>th</sup> meeting was submitted to the legislative oversight committees by the January 1<sup>st</sup> deadline. There were several unresolved items in the plan. The staff facilitated several Advisory Task Force meetings to resolve those issues. The consensus of the Advisory Task Force was e-mailed to the members of the commission for review.

The usual items were posted on the Commission website including the Power Point presentation prepared for the House and Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Environment on February 5, 2003.

An application for a Class V injection well was received by UIC on March 7<sup>th</sup> from the Webster Water Alliance. The pilot project is very controversial. Senator Bill Jones has requested a hearing on the matter. The staff will keep the Commission updated as to future developments.

The staff attended the Outreach Committee meeting on February 25, 2003. The summary of the meeting was e-mailed to the members of the Advisory Task Force and Ground Water Management Commission.

The staff will have an information booth at the Department of Environmental Quality Conference, “Waste Management and the Environment,” scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, 2003, in Lafayette.

The Sparta Ground Water Conservation District’s Application for Critical Ground Water Area designation is under review and should be completed within six months from the date of the hearing.

## **Update on Advisory Task Force Activities**

The Outreach Sub-committee met on February 25<sup>th</sup> to review the presentation for the legislative briefing, discuss the format for the briefing and other immediate outreach issues. A formal request to meet with the Senate and House Committees on the Environment and Natural Resources will be sent to the committee chairs. The goal of the briefing is to give the legislators basic information so they can base their decisions upon an understanding of the science employed in the Commission's implementation plan.

The Surface and Groundwater Sub-committee made recommendations to the Advisory Task Force. Since there was not a quorum, Olevia McDonald recommended the commissioners review the minutes of the Advisory Task Force meeting and incorporate those recommendations into the findings.

## **Old Business: Discussion of the draft, *Statewide Water Management Program – a Plan for Implementation.***

After numerous Task Force meeting discussions, the following items have been prepared by the Ground Water Management Commission staff as consensus points for consideration.

### **Item 1: Legal status of groundwater**

The consensus is that groundwater can be regulated by the state under existing law.

### **Item 3b: Specific functions, roles and responsibilities of the agency/division**

#### **Agency Structure**

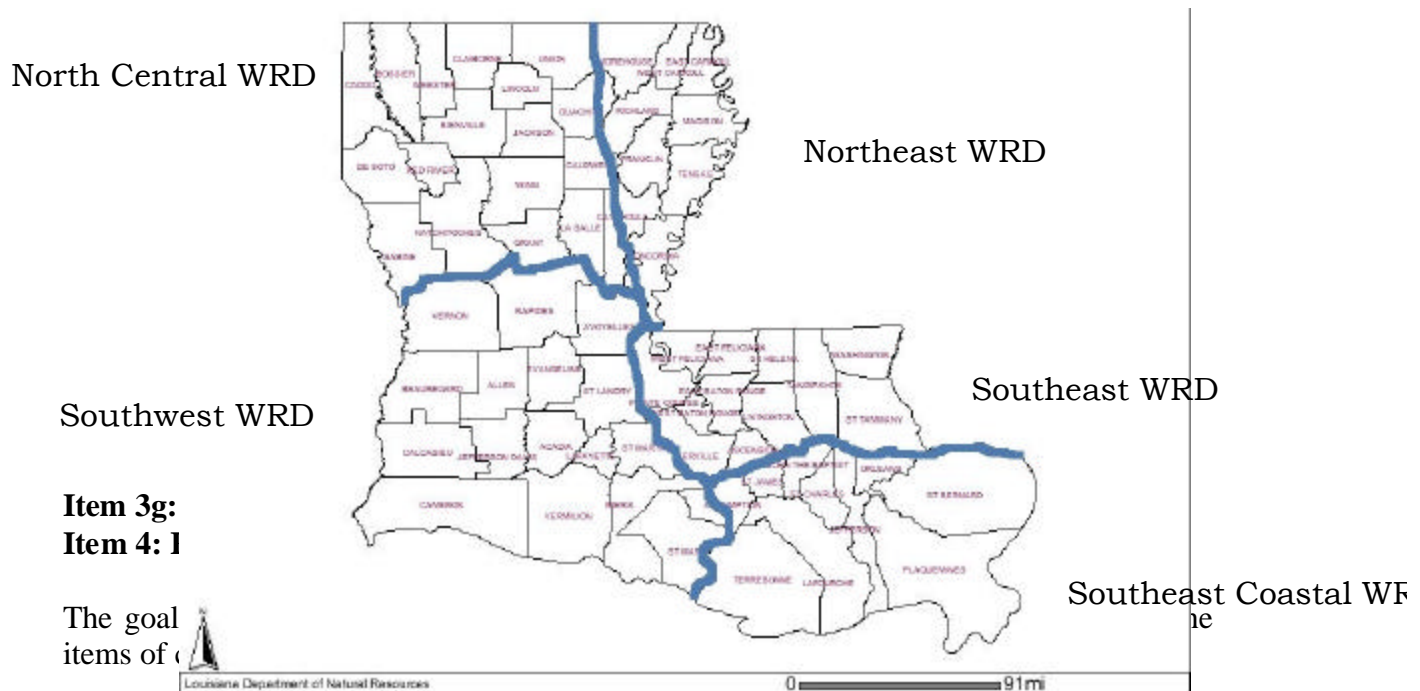
It is proposed that a Water Management Division (Agency) be established in the Office of Conservation to serve as the technical staff to the proposed Water Management Commission (Commission). Subject to Commission approval, agency responsibilities should include all policy/rule making, planning, data management, recordkeeping and administration of the plan. This includes technical reviews of critical groundwater area applications, review of Water Resources District (District) recommendations and technical advisory committee proposals. The agency will also assume the following duties currently performed by the DOTD: well registration and permitting, licensing of water well drillers, well construction and plugging inspections, groundwater data collection and dissemination, water supply and use studies, and the groundwater cooperative program with the USGS.

### Regions and Water Resource Districts

It is proposed that the state be divided into three “Regions” within the agency for departmental administrative purposes.

It is recommended that up to five “Water Resource Districts” (Districts) be established. Each District should have an advisory board consisting of appointed members representing a cross-section of the stakeholders within that District. The advisory board would make recommendations to the Commission for management and development of water resources in the designated District in accordance with the Statewide Water Management Plan. Districts may be authorized to conduct studies and propose management guidelines for their districts. Sufficient administrative support should be provided by the state.

The District boundaries would be established by the Commission in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. Recommendations for the general geographic locations of the districts are depicted on the following map.



1. Consistent with R.S. 38:3091-3098.8, all new wells should be registered.
2. Permitting of new wells may be a management tool in areas designated as critical, potentially critical or stressed groundwater areas as defined in the state comprehensive water management plan. Restrictions (e.g. production volume, spacing and depth) could be placed on any new large volume wells (as designated in paragraph 3) in other areas of the state, if it is determined that operation of the proposed well will result in significant long-term impacts to surrounding wells or the aquifer. The registration process should be used to identify such wells.

3. The permitting threshold for new wells should be based on well casing diameter size, as this is easily measured in the field.
4. The details of a registration or permitting program should be developed through the Administrative Procedures Act.

### **Commission Questions and Comments**

The Commission discussed the consensus points prepared by the staff at length but did not reach a consensus. The recommendations and wording continued to change after the meeting via e-mail. No consensus was reached.

### **Schedule for the next Meeting**

To be scheduled at a later date.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.